

The Dallas Morning News (Texas)

November 2, 2007 Friday

## **Irving council approves ban on unattended tethered dogs: Owners of unattended, chained pets to receive Class C misdemeanors**

BYLINE: Brandon Formby, The Dallas Morning News

SECTION: STATE AND REGIONAL NEWS

LENGTH: 582 words

Nov. 2--The Irving City Council unanimously approved an ordinance Thursday night that bans tethering unattended dogs any time, any place. The new city law is believed to be the first of its kind in North Texas.

Irving's ordinance goes beyond a state law that went into effect in September that limits the time dog owners can tether their pets to between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

"We've chosen as a community to make ours a little stricter," said Fred Sanderson, Irving's animal services manager.

Mr. Sanderson said the law is aligned with a growing national movement of dog lovers and lawmakers who believe tethering dogs can make them more aggressive.

Dale and Kristi McKenzie, whose 8-year-old son, Shane, was attacked by a tethered dog in March, were among a dozen residents who supported the ordinance. Shane has undergone eight surgeries to repair his carotid artery after a tethered Akita mix jumped him when he went into its yard to retrieve a basketball.

"Children have no fear," Mrs. McKenzie told council members Thursday. "They love everything."

Supporters of anti-tethering laws say tethering creates a negative emotional and psychological environment for animals that are social by nature. They also say tethered dogs are more likely to attack because they are more aggressive and territorial.

On Thursday, several of the ordinance's supporters told the council that dog owners should be responsible enough to create a secure environment for their animals without relying on tethering.

But opponents of anti-tethering laws, including the American Kennel Club, say they unfairly punish responsible pet owners who tether dogs to train them and to keep them in unfenced yards.

Irving resident Robert Lamon and his wife told the council the ordinance goes too far. They said that if they didn't tether their 80-pound mixed-breed dog, she would dig under or jump over their fence. Mr. Lamon said the council was putting an undue burden on many owners and could lead to more dogs running loose.

"How many dogs are you prepared to euthanize because the people can't afford to keep them now?" Mr. Lamon said.

Irving's new law prohibits tying dogs up and leaving them unattended. Owners are allowed to tether a when they are present if necessary to protect the animal or another person. Owners also may tie up a dog on their property if they are present and the pet is more than 15 feet from the edge of a public street or sidewalk. Dogs also may be tethered in a designated dog park as long as their owners are present.

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The law does not apply to hand-held leashes or restraints. Dogs can be tethered during veterinary treatments, grooming, training or law enforcement activities.

Mr. Sanderson said that though the law goes into effect immediately, animal control officers plan to spread the word before they begin handing out Class C misdemeanor citations Jan. 1.

"We need to give the public a chance to get educated," Mr. Sanderson said.

Irving's municipal court is expected to set an amount for the fine that comes with a citation. The court can assess up to \$2,000 on Class C misdemeanors.

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The Dallas Morning News (Texas)

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November 1, 2007 Thursday

## **Irving ordinance would ban unattended chained-up dogs: City following growing theory that tethering makes pets more hostile**

BYLINE: Brandon Formby, The Dallas Morning News

SECTION: STATE AND REGIONAL NEWS

LENGTH: 958 words

Nov. 1--Irving residents accustomed to tying their dogs up and leaving them unattended in their yards could soon face misdemeanor charges. The Irving City Council is expected to vote today on an ordinance that would criminalize tethering unattended dogs -- any time, any place.

Irving animal services manager Fred Sanderson admits the ordinance -- believed to be the first of its kind for a North Texas city -- is strict. But he also said the city is getting ahead of a growing national faction of dog lovers, humane groups and lawmakers who believe that tethering dogs can make them more aggressive.

"There is a Texas-wide movement, and it's really all over the country," Mr. Sanderson said. "It's very progressive."

Irving residents Dale and Kristi McKenzie, whose 8-year-old son, Shane, was attacked by a tethered dog earlier this year, plan to voice their support for the ordinance at today's council meeting.

Shane spent a week in the hospital after an Akita mix jumped him when he went in its yard to retrieve a basketball. He's since had eight surgeries and doesn't like being around dogs.

"If I had known about this dog, my son would have never been down there," Mrs. McKenzie said.

Irving's proposed ordinance goes beyond a state law that went into effect in September that specifies how dogs can be tied up. It also limits the time period that dog owners can tether their pets to between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

The state Legislature this year also made it easier to prosecute owners of dogs who kill or seriously injure people. That law provides for some of the nation's stiffest dog-bite penalties.

The Austin City Council this year passed a tougher anti-tethering ordinance similar to Irving's. It went into effect Oct. 1. Last month, the Grand Prairie City Council passed an ordinance that says owners can tether their pets for only three hours during a 24-hour period.

"Everybody's going to be coming up with something in one form or another to comply with state law," said Jay Sabatucci, southwest regional program manager for the Humane Society of the United States.

And it's not just Texas and its cities looking at anti-tethering measures. California passed a law last year that, like Grand Prairie's, prohibits tether-

Irving ordinance would ban unattended chained-up dogs: City following growing theory that tethering makes pets more hostile The Dallas Morning News (Texas) November 1, 2007 Thursday

ing dogs for more than three hours. Pennsylvania legislators are considering a bill that limits how long dogs can be tethered.

Anti-tethering bills in states including Rhode Island and Maine, meanwhile, have failed to pass.

Several animal control officials and nonprofits that handle pets believe that tethering dogs for extended periods of time is inhumane. Among other things, they say, it creates a negative emotional and psychological environment for animals that are hard-wired to be social. They also say tethered dogs are more likely to attack because they are more aggressive and territorial.

"A dog stuck on a chain is not a member of our family; it's a watchdog," Mr. Sabatucci said. "It's a different mindset."

A few years ago, Tammy Grimes started a grass-roots effort to educate neighbors on the effects tethering has on a dog's mentality and behavior.

"If you live next to a chained dog, it's so understandable," she said. "A lot of people who don't see it on a daily basis don't understand what the dog goes through."

Today, her Pennsylvania-based group Dogs Deserve Better tracks city ordinances and state bills on anti-tethering around the country and asks people to voice their support of the measures to elected officials.

The group also has an initiative called Mothers Against Dog Chaining, a coalition of moms whose children have been injured or killed by tethered dogs. Ms. Grimes said that while tethered dogs are typically unable to get out of their yards, nothing prevents people from going into them.

"A child doesn't understand property lines," she said. "All they see is a dog, and they just want to pet a dog."

But not all animal groups agree with anti-tethering laws. American Kennel Club spokeswoman Lisa Peterson agrees that tethered dogs should be comfortable, have access to water and shelter and be paid plenty of attention without being left on a chain all day. She said some owners tether their dogs because they don't have fences but are still loving, caring pet owners.

"You're trying to target the irresponsible dog owner who may be abusing use of tethering, but what happens is the dog owners who know how to use it correctly are penalized or punished," she said.

Ms. McKenzie, whose son was attacked this year, said she wants the Irving council to pass the ban tonight. She said that it's been a tough several months for her family, but she's just glad Shane survived.

"He's still traumatized of dogs, but he's very lucky," she said.

And Texas' new anti-tethering law could get even tougher in the future. Erin Colletti Tresner is a legislative aide for state Rep. Buddy West, who authored the law limiting tethering hours in the state. She said the current law refrained from banning tethering altogether because Mr. West, R-Odessa, wanted to educate people about how extensive tethering affects dogs. She said staffers in Mr. West's office plan to tweak the current law and make it stricter.

"We got a lot accomplished in the beginning, but we still feel like we have more to do," she said. "The animal groups couldn't believe we were already doing this. It's really a new thing."

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Richmond Times - Dispatch (Virginia)

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October 23, 2007 Tuesday

## **Richmond council OKs dog ordinance: Leaving dog tethered for more than 1 hour punishable by fines**

BYLINE: Michael Martz, Richmond Times-Dispatch, Va.

SECTION: STATE AND REGIONAL NEWS

LENGTH: 618 words

Oct. 23----City Hall

It looked like a chain from a tow truck.

But the clanking metal chain that Jenny Jones slowly lifted into view last night for a startled Richmond City Council had been wrapped around the neck of a 33-pound dog.

Jones, who is manager of the Richmond Division of Animal Care and Control, sees up to five cases a month of dogs who have been chained so long that the metal is embedded in their necks.

"Consider the neighbors of these poor, tormented dogs," she said.

The council considered. And then it acted, passing an ordinance that makes it punishable by fines and jail time to leave a dog tethered for more than an hour a day.

The ordinance passed 7-0, with Councilwomen Delores L. McQuinn and Ellen F. Robertson abstaining. Both said they were concerned about the potential consequences of moving too fast to crack down on people who chain or tether their dogs outside.

McQuinn worried about an 80-year-old East End resident who keeps a dog for security but can't afford to fence her backyard. "What happens to her now?" asked the councilwoman, who represents the 7th District.

Adrian Preston's grandmother is in the same predicament. Preston, a South Richmond resident, asked for more time before putting the ordinance into effect.

"It's not that I don't care about dogs," he said after the vote. "It's the people who don't have fences. I was hoping this would get postponed for a while."

But the ordinance had overwhelming public backing last night, with almost 20 people urging its passage and at least as many sitting in the audience in support.

"The public is frightened of aggressive dogs," said Robin R. Starr, president and chief executive officer of the Richmond SPCA. "And they are disgusted and dismayed by animal abuse."

The testimony included vivid accounts of attacks by dogs that had been chained for long periods of time and then gotten free. They heard of police officers bitten, children mauled and bicyclists chased.

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Claire Ward recounted her terrifying encounter with a pit bull terrier that mauled her and killed her Cardigan Welsh corgi, Barney, last spring.

"The only thing I could do was throw my body on it and watch my dog die," Ward said tearfully.

The ordinance would make it unlawful for owners to fail to give their dogs adequate space, as defined by state law, or to tether them for more than one hour cumulatively in a 24-hour period.

A first offense would be a Class 3 misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$500. A second offense would be a Class 2 misdemeanor, with a fine of up to \$1,000 and jail up to six months. A third offense or more would be a Class 1 misdemeanor, with a fine of up to \$2,500 and 12 months in jail.

The prospect of stiff penalties worried Robertson, who said she supports the bill but fears what might happen if people try to avoid prosecution.

"What if they let these dogs off their chains tomorrow? she asked. "What if these dogs are just left free, and we have not prepared ourselves for the consequences?"

Advocates say leaving the animals in chains just makes the danger greater to the public.

"My concern is not just for the dogs and their deprivation," trainer Marie Tripton said. "My concern is for the people who encounter these dogs."

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Chains-of-pain ban urged The Cincinnati Enquirer (Ohio) November 3, 2007  
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The Cincinnati Enquirer (Ohio)

November 3, 2007 Saturday  
Final Edition

## Chains-of-pain ban urged

BYLINE: Janice Morse [jmorse@enquirer.com](mailto:jmorse@enquirer.com)

SECTION: METRO; Pg. 1B

LENGTH: 897 words

Third case of dog-tether charge prompts call for new laws

For at least the third time this year, a dog has been seriously hurt in Butler County from being left chained up too long.

Disgusted by the trend, animal advocates are unleashing pleas for local officials to enact laws restricting how long - if at all - dogs can be tethered to a stake, tree or other stationary point.

They argue that people who neglect animals often have no qualms about hurting people, too - and that mistreated animals become so miserable that they might lash out and attack passersby, even children.

"We're just saying, 'Give the dog some kind of quality life,' so they won't be a danger to their community," said Leland Gordon, executive director of the Animal Friends Humane Society in Butler County. "I don't know of anyone who will admit it's OK to have a dog tied up 24/7."

A number of communities nationwide have passed bans or restrictions on dog-chaining.

HelpingAnimals.com, a Web site sponsored by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, cites 14 communities that ban chaining, including Little Rock, Ark., and 50 more from Los Angeles to New Orleans to Racine, Wis., that limit how long dogs can be chained.

Another Web site, [dogsdeservebetter.com](http://dogsdeservebetter.com), cites dozens of communities with chaining restrictions, including Indianapolis and Louisville.

In Butler County, the debate re-emerged Friday when Gordon discussed the case of Lucky.

That's a dog that officials say suffered significant injury from long-term chaining. The dog's owner faces two misdemeanor criminal charges, and signed papers relinquishing custody of the animal to the society, which is seeking someone to adopt Lucky.

In April, Middletown became the first local city to enact an ordinance forbidding dogs from being chained to stationary objects. This town requires dogs to be put in pens or hooked onto clotheslines or cable "runs" that allow the animals to be mobile. Dogs also cannot be restrained for more than 12 hours within a 24-hour period.

In the first six months since the Middletown law's enactment, animal control officer Liz Lucas has issued warnings to 100 people. Only about six of those were prosecuted. Everyone else fixed the problems cited.

"For a lot of people, their mentality is that dogs can be chained up for however long you want - just ignore them and forget about them . . . it's a mindset," she said. "Once you explain, it gets through to most people. It's re-education."

Some restrictions can be reasonable, said Lisa Peterson, spokeswoman for the American Kennel Club. But her group opposes outright bans on stationary tethering.

Chains-of-pain ban urged The Cincinnati Enquirer (Ohio) November 3, 2007  
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\For some owners, a chain secured to a stake in the ground might be the only affordable and practical option their living situation permits, she said. Those dog owners shouldn't be punished for "some irresponsible dog owners who use tethering incorrectly," Peterson said.

Also, some question whether tether-specific laws are needed when existing anti-cruelty laws can apply.

"Sometimes, it's obvious that they (the dogs) have been there for a very, very long time," said Boone County Sheriff's Sgt. Cayne Brown. Situations where it is clear that the animal was deprived of food, water or shelter would violate cruelty laws, he said.

Lucky's case, which happened in Lemon Township, near Monroe, joins two previous Butler County cases. Dogs that were renamed China and Hope were found with their tethers - one a chain, the other a cable - embedded in their necks, leading to animal cruelty convictions of their owners. Lucky's owner, identified as Woodford Weybright, couldn't be reached for comment.

According to a report from the dog warden's office, a neighbor feared that Lucky's loud whimpering was the result of a beating. When officers arrived Monday, they found "the dog was unable to lie down, had no water, (no) food and was unable to get to shed for shelter."

Two officers spent 10 minutes untying the dog. The tether had rubbed Lucky's neck raw, but had not become embedded. The animal also was underweight, flea-infested and "had ulcers in both lower cheeks with swelling on top of (his) snout," the report says.

Shari Riggs, an Ohio representative for Dogs Deserve Better, says, "The embedding in the neck happens much more frequently than people think. I see it regularly. This happens, surprisingly, from people that are well-off and well-educated to those who aren't so well-off or so well-educated."

Gordon said Hamilton City Council is weighing his proposal to enact a similar, but more lenient law than Middletown's. He is planning presentations to other local leaders.

While any dog on a chain should have access to shade, food and water, Liberty Township Trustee David Kern said, "I don't think it's inordinately cruel to tether or restrain an animal, whether it's a horse, a cow or a dog. I would not be in favor of banning the chaining of dogs."

Kern also said he is skeptical of reforms backed by PETA.

"PETA is an extremist group that is detrimental to our nation," he said.

ONLINE

To see a list of communities that have restricted dog-chaining, go to [www.helpinganimals.com](http://www.helpinganimals.com)

The Enquirer / Tony Jones

Two kinds of collars shown by Lt. Julie Holmes, a Butler County Dog Warden/Humane Officer are among those sometimes used in long-term tethering. Michelle Wenning from Animal Friends Humane Society in Trenton holds Lucky, that officials say was hurt by chaining.

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